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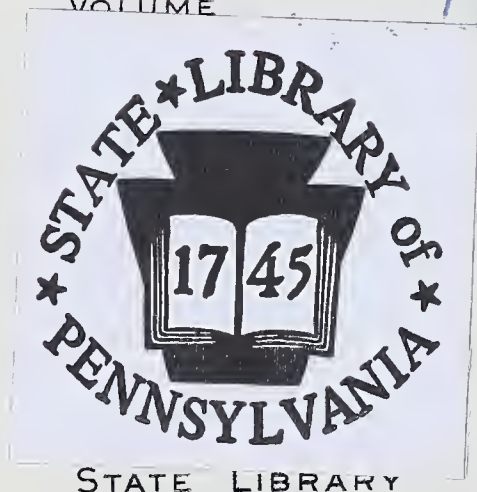
HER POEMS
OF EMILY DICKINSON

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OF EMILY DICKINSON

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FURTHER POEMS OF EMILY DICKINSON



WITHHELD FROM PUBLICATION
BY HER SISTER LAVINIA



EDITED BY HER NIECE
MARTHA DICKINSON BIANCHI
AND ALFRED LEETE HAMPSON



LITTLE, BROWN, AND COMPANY

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I

LB 233

Many of the pages are difficult to read. Some of the writing is in the shy character of her girlish habit; others are so bold there are but two words on a line and in ink not yet faded.

There are poems of each variety she made her own. They flash, they are droll, they are Nature speaking aloud, they tell the love she glorified in so direct and intimate a way that this may have been the reason they were withheld; and there are also a number of her metaphysical poems which her "Sister Sue" recognized from the first as her claim to genius.

It is possible that these were intended for another volume in the series already published. It is certain that to destroy them would be heresy to the faith of her following.

It is almost a hundred years since the birth of Emily Dickinson in 1830, and she herself said :

“After a hundred years
 Nobody knows the place,
 Agony enacted there
 Motionless as peace.”

Yet in her own case it has not proved so. She has not been left behind; and in an age that outgrows everything in faith or fashion Emily is yet to be overtaken. There seems to be in her something of what she calls

“The over-take-lessness of those
 Who have accomplished death.”

But Emily may be said to have accomplished death without loss of life, and to have become the incarnation of her own poem :

“As if the sea should part
 And show a further sea,
 And that a further, and the three
 But a presumption be
 Of periods of seas
 Unvisited of shores,
 Themselves the verge of shores to be —
 Eternity is these.”

II

Emily was a universal creature, her mind always tuned for a dash to any pole, her raids on truth directed by her own premonitions, — a “Fellow of the Royal Infinity” perhaps, like her own “Pine Tree.”

Yet there have been critics, souls even, one rejoices not to say priests, disturbed by her irreverence. It has also been said that her letters and conversation were salted with the Bible and its characters with a spontaneous directness that would have delighted St. Francis of Assisi as much as it would have desolated Cotton Mather. But the religious naïveté of her environment must be suggested in extenuation, — the Calvinistic rigidity of precise definition so antagonistic to her intuition of the unknown.

It is in this mood of exasperation that she asks :

“We prate of Heaven,
We pray to Heaven,
Relate when neighbors die
At what o’clock to Heaven they fled —
Who saw them wherefore fly?”

If she appeared to take liberties with her own relation to her religious training it was probably because she often felt nearer of kin to her Father in Heaven than her New England father on earth. Her spirit approached the Unseen with more assurance in the range of the immaterial and boundless by some subtle bond that saved her from fear, until she was snatched back again by the force of instilled temerity.

She says she often felt “God must be lonesome in dreary highness, up above flower or cloud or star”; and when in one rebellious outburst she cries :

“I don’t like Paradise !
Eden will be so lonesome
Bright Wednesday afternoons —”

it is an Emily oppressed by the loss of perspective on her dear familiar, the foreseeing herself projected into a spacious prominence abhorrent to her.

The more she braves it out, as in the poem :

“If God would make a visit
Or ever took a nap,
So not to see us, — but they say
Himself a telescope
Perennial beholds us,
Myself would run away
From Him and Holy Ghost and All, —
But there’s the Judgment Day !”

the more she trembles beneath her little dimity apron lest after all “God turn and look at me.” For being Puritan born and bent, the Judgment Day, though less imminent, was no less due than Cattle Show or Commencement.

In her outbreak over the injustice done to Moses :

“It always seemed to me a wrong
To that old Moses done
To let him see the Canaan
Without the entering —”

and further on where she speaks of

“God’s adroiter will
As boy should deal with lesser boy —”

she is not really calling her Creator a bully, she is only “Emily outraged” again, as when we ran to her with our childish tales of injustice.

“Old man on Nebo
Late as this
One justice bleeds for thee!”

is not literary extravaganza. Emily meant it. She too had known a Paradise withdrawn, such as Dante never conceived.

Never was she more in earnest than when she cried :

“Of course I prayed.
And did God care?
He cared as much as
On the air
A bird had stamped her foot
And cried ‘Give me’!”

Here she is venting what she calls “the smart misery of life.”

She must be taken in all sincerity, if at all. If she begins a poem in startling fashion :

“My period had come for prayer
No other art would do,
My tactics missed a rudiment,
Creator, was it you?”

the last verse carries this supreme conclusion :

“The silence condescended
The heavens paused for me,
But awed beyond my errand
I worshipped
Did not pray.”

To one who knew Emily in life, she was a denizen of awe. “Areas of the supernatural she recognized about her.” In her poem :

“It’s easy to invent a life,
God does it every day,
Creation but the gambol
Of His authority —”

she is merely for the moment in the greenroom, behind the scenes of creation, and, taking her Maker on equal terms, relating it from that point of view.

She did profess the Devil as the best of friends, if “he could be amended”, so that his ability became “durably divine”, thereby ranging herself alone against the condemning trio, — Milton, Dante and Goethe.

She never glossed over her own stark need to know, yet her real reverence is not alien to that of the Psalmist David, the Prophet Isaiah, or that shrewdest of them all, the Paradoxer of Ecclesiastes. Something of those dramatic Old Testament maidens was inherent in her likewise. She would have hidden Moses, gone to her king with the demure mien of Esther, exulted full stride with Miriam, and oh ! most surely have let down that red thread with Rahab from sheer love of mystery and a sign. The devotion of Ruth was hers also, and later in life the quality of the inconsolable Rachel.

It is a misdemeanor to chide Emily for irreverence.

Only picture her drooping away from her dear pastor on that week-day summer afternoon, under his urgent invitation to conviction of sin and a policy of speedy reconciliation with her Maker, while her will was adamant to resist such blasphemy against her own ideas of Love and Life. Wide allowance he

made for her, somewhat abashed by her shining ignorance as she denied being party to any quarrel with what had made her, or any need of any one to make it up for her. Honor to him that he informed her father she seemed exceptional to the rules of the technique of regeneration as commonly practised.

No, Emily could not be made to have faith. Her alert curiosity could not be drugged into it by dogma. Nor could she be watched in her soul's most holy offices.

As she herself expressed it :

“Too much of proof affronts belief,
The turtle will not try
Unless you leave him,
Then return — and he
Has hauled away !”

Quales, Blake, Jonathan Edwards strove in her make-up, and each won out at intervals in her writing. The way she bares being without subterfuge is like nothing but the primitives on the cloister wall. She pretends nothing, disdains posture calculated to throw any one subtlety into high relief or out of true focus. It is all laid down without a superfluous gesture. She leaves it there, without rounding it out ; and the flat fact is oftenest on a spiritual dead gold, underlaid with sheer simplicity, as seen by the frank stare of a child.

III

Emily's affair with words was her own. She read the dictionary as the rest of her family read the newspaper for the latest news, but no one ever saw her

consult it. It was magic to her, not a spelling book; and as some one has said, "there is an absolute lack of studio finish in her work."

Of all beings she was the most tacit. Speaking of summer's grace striving with her for notice she says:

"I never questioned her,
She never questioned me,
Our compact was a wordless
Sympathy."

Nothing was ever short enough for her. Yet she was always so hurried that of the endless New England winter she declares:

"The Winters are so short
I'm hardly justified
In sending all the birds away
And moving into pod —"

and her sister Lavinia heard her repeated murmur in her later years, "Oh, Vinnie, my work, my work!" and was at loss to understand. For, though Emily relied on Lavinia for the stability of her universe, she did not confide in her.

Her spontaneity in words pried under accepted usage or set fire to it. She speaks of "the Sun, busy with majesty", and of a day after a tragedy that "unrolled as huge as yesterdays in pairs." She casually alludes to God as "vouching with hyperbolic archness"; and who else ever began so lusty a line for the dead as:

“What care the Dead for Chanticleer?
 What care the Dead for day?
 ’Tis late your morning vex their face
 With purple ribaldry!”

Purple ribaldry — a revel it must have been to her when that adjective caught her.

In an exhaustive review of her in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* entitled “La Vie Secrète d’Une Puritaine, Emily Dickinson,” it is exciting to see how she sparkles in the exact language of science and court, which adds a cutting to her gems that leaves our blunter English dim by comparison.

Metaphor is her characteristic figure, of course, and it could never be too terse for her liking; for which reason some of her admirers who are Oriental scholars long to see her consummate in the concentrated and permanent forms of the Chinese. Her letters are the record of her external life, her poems the journal of her mind and soul — where they went — what happened to them.

She has been given a wide range of labels by her reviewers, from the “Modern Sappho” to a “Hermit Thrush”, from a “New England Nun” to “an Epigrammatic Walt Whitman.” One Reverend Father of a most holy Order declares: “Emily is Malchizedeck, without father, without mother, without descent; having neither beginning nor end of life; born not after the law of carnal commandment but after the power of an endless life.”

Yet to one who saw Emily “plain” —

“Light laughs the breeze
In her castle above them —”

and escaping their verbal nets, light laughs Emily at all efforts to enmesh her.

There has been undue stress laid upon her avoidance of what Emerson calls “those devastators of the day.” She was never wantonly a recluse, nor did she know she was one. She ran from people because time was precious and the Declaration of Independence promised her the right to happiness where and how she found it. How well her sister Lavinia knew it was no renunciation to fly many of the situations she faced in Emily’s stead. Emily’s poems came and she let them in, while Lavinia, hearing a knock, opened the door to “traffic with a berry woman.”

The world Emily was running from was not the world of now. It was a small country village “drifted deep in Parian” all the slow winter long, a small country village all the dusty summer through — with its births and deaths, spites, ministerial taking-sides, early tea parties, religious revivals in season, or the panic of unexpected relatives driving up for uninvited visits. All of which became empty or arduous beside that inner society peopled by the Brownings, “Immortality”, “Eternity”, the Brontës and all the rest of her intimates.

Always those three Brontë girls were most her own kin. The desolation of their grim Haworth

rectory howled over by distracted winds makes Emily's form of exclusive solitude seem cosmopolitan. As one of her English critics said, "she built her world of treasures and familiar things within. She never adjusted herself to her world — she moved to a brilliant and subtle solitude leagues within — without shrinkage, rather with increase of her mental powers."

Had a career been open to Emily she would never have fluttered far from the doorway of the old place that cherished her. She was mentally free to the quiet necessary for her thought. That was the freedom she craved.

"It is easy to work

When the soul is at play"

she says.

Nor could there be a gentler illustration of her inborn modesty than her little way of putting in "My Sister Sue * said —" before some blinding flash of her own, which never deceived Sister Sue when quoted back at her by the dazzled hearer.

In their day, to teach or to marry was the only question. Of one Emily seems never to have dreamed; of the other to have dreamed only.

To her Sister Sue she gave that "love which is the passionate art of sharing", but the protection of her home where all drew a charmed circle about her was a dominant element in her result. There, of every shade in Nature she was

"Witness for the crown —"

* Susan Gilbert Dickinson, the wife of Emily's only brother, Austin.

There her ears caught those

“Drums off the phantom battlements.”

There, oftentimes “among her mind” such glee possessed her she vows had she but ballet knowledge she would put herself abroad

“In pirouette to blanch a troupe
Or lay a Prima mad.”

Again her mental exercise took a colder shade, and she says :

“I tried to think a lonelier thing
Than any I had seen,
Some polar expiation,
An omen in the bone
Of Death’s tremendous nearness.”

It was there she became conscious in her chamber of a “Shapeless Friend.” It was there she

“Opened wide her narrow hands
To gather Paradise.”

IV

The love poems as given here form an almost unbroken narrative of Emily’s own experience, from the first sight of the man she heard as a stranger preaching in Philadelphia, on through their mutual bewilderment, certainty, and renunciation.

Without a doubt their first recognition is recorded by her in an otherwise rather insignificant poem sent to her Sister Sue a little later :

“As the eyes accost and sunder
 In an audience,
 Stamped in instances forever —
 So may countenance
 Entertain without addressing
 Countenance of One
 In a neighboring horizon,
 Gone as soon as known.”

Hitherto the bread of life had been broken for Emily by aged hands. She had associated public worship with all that was most depressing, painstakingly pointed out in its loneliest light as a remote means of escape from the Judgment Day. Was it strange that from the first moment she was won by a young heart kindling the Light of the World before her seeking eyes?

She heard the stranger more than once before they met and spoke together, speculators both in those conjectures of the Spirit toward which she was temperamentally predisposed. He was young, full of the grace of youth as well as the grace of God; the power of conviction and eagerness was his also. His preaching must have been for her the original of her later lines to her nephew:

“Had but the tale a warbling teller
 All the boys would come,
 Orpheus’ sermon captivated —
 It did not condemn.”

It certainly captivated Emily, nor did it condemn; for it was held by her Sister Lavinia as well as her

Sister Sue that Emily was the one who resisted — when his own ties of home and pulpit were mentally lost down the winds under the spell she cast over him.

As one of her devoted advocates has written me, “Emily grew her vision standing for the truth as God gave her to see it. For this she withstood volcanic passion. With every impulse to go to hell, with the whole lineage of martyrs to passion sanctioning it, from Sappho to Byron, she just didn’t. Sappho became Puritan.”

Emily herself says:

“I took one draught of life —
I’ll tell you what I paid,
Precisely an existence,
The market price, they said.”

She glorified her Elect and felt herself glorified in him. It is due in some part to his persuasive and brilliant ministry that her poems more often than not concern themselves with immortality and have a tendency toward heaven in the last line. After his death she was more than ever permeated by the Unseen, which was almost an actual presence with her at times.

All her life through there were men of distinguished attainment who sought her for her peculiar fascination and continued to come to the very end to hear her talk and to meet her high demand for their own conclusions, as best they might. But one only dominated her. To Emily All had no codicil.

“It would never be common more, I said,
Difference had begun —”

expressed it for her.

“Till death is too brief loving”

she discovers later, as also that piercing truth,

“So well that I can live without —
I love Thee.”

One of her “transporting aims” she tells in :

“The Heaven you know to understand —
That you not be ashamed
Of me in Christ’s bright audience
Upon the further hand.”

In their earlier days she was often playful, always rapt in her approach, whether she tended her flowers for him, her “Bright Absentee”, or shivered before Love’s “Alpine requirements”, or offered her

“Shares in Primrose banks”

for a sight of his face, — or, baffled in trying to say how much she loves, begs the question with

“The wind does not require the grass
To answer wherefore when He pass
She cannot keep her place !”

She declares, “He taught me waiting by myself”, “Fortitude of Fate”, “Altitude of Death”; yet it was “Joy to have merited the pain !” She says :

“Where thou art, there it is home —
Cashmere or Calvary !”

which lays bare the hidden meaning of her soft, repeated "I am not at home now", or "When I was at home", spoken of in her *Life and Letters*.

As the years went on, what had been voluntary renunciation passed by cold gradations into what she called "a threadless way" through which she "pushed mechanic feet"; while more closely she identified love and death in eternity, until her love poems and death poems were almost inextricably one, leading up to the climax of that poem beginning:

"A wife at daybreak I shall be"

where "with miracle behind her and miracle before" she passes "from midnight into victory" with her undaunted words:

"Midnight. 'Good night!'
I hear them call,
The Angels bustle in the hall,
Softly my Future climbs the stair,
I fumble at my childhood's prayer,
So soon to be a child no more!
Eternity, I'm coming, Sir,
Master, I've seen that face before."

For Emily —

"Death but the drift of Eastern gray
Dissolving in the East away
Before the West begins."

MARTHA DICKINSON BIANCHI

July, 1928

THE EVERGREENS,

AMHERST, MASSACHUSETTS

ONE

I FEAR a man of scanty speech,
 I fear a silent man,
 Haranguer I can overtake
 Or babbler entertain —

But he who waiteth
 While the rest
 Expend their inmost pound,
 Of this Man I am wary —
 I fear that He is Grand.

PUBLICATION is the auction
Of the mind of man,
Poverty be justifying
For so foul a thing.

Possibly, — but we would rather
From our garret go
White unto the White Creator,
Than invest our snow.

Thought belongs to Him who gave it —
Then to him who bear
Its corporeal illustration. Sell
The Royal air
In the parcel. Be the merchant
Of the Heavenly Grace,
But reduce no human spirit
To disgrace of price !

SOME work for Immortality,
The chiefer part of *Time*;
He compensates immediately
The former checks on Fame.

Slow gold, but everlasting,
The bullion of To-day
Contrasted with the currency
Of Immortality.

A beggar here and there
Is gifted to discern
Beyond the broker's insight —
One's *Money* — One's the *Mine*.

THE popular Heart is a
Cannon first,
Subsequent a drum;
Bells for an auxiliary
And an afterward of rum.

Not a to-morrow to know its name,
Nor a past to stare,
Ditches for realms and
A trip to jail
For a souvenir !

FUNNY to be a Century
 And see the people going by,
 I should die of the oddity,
 But then I'm not so
 Staid as he.

He keeps his secrets safely, very —
 Were he to tell, extremely sorry
 This bashful globe of ours
 Would be,
 So dainty of publicity !

I CANNOT dance upon my toes,
 No man instructed me,
 But often times among my mind
 A glee possesseth me
 That had I ballet knowledge
 Would put itself abroad
 In pirouette to blanch a troupe,
 Or lay a Prima mad!
 And though I had no gown of gauze,
 No ringlet to my hair,
 Nor hopped for audiences like birds,
 One claw upon the air, —
 Nor tossed my shape in
 Eider balls,
 Nor rolled on wheels of snow
 Till I was out of sight in sound,
 The house encored me so —
 Nor any knew I know the art
 I mention easy here —
 Nor any placard boast me,
 It's full as opera!

'TIS opposites entice,
Deformed men ponder grace,
Bright fires, the blanketless —
The lost, Day's face.

The blind esteem it be
Enough estate to see;
The captive strangles new
For deeming beggars play.

To lack enamour Thee,
Tho' the Divinity
Be only
Me.

COLOR, Caste, Denomination —
 These are Time's affair,
 Death's division classifying
 Does not know they are.

As in sleep — all here forgotten,
 Tenets put behind,
 Death's large democratic fingers
 Rub away the brand.

If Circassian — He is careless —
 If He put away
 Chrysalis of Blonde or Umber,
 Equal butterfly —

They emerge from His obscuring,
 What Death knows so well,
 Our minuter intuitions
 Deem incredible.

I RECKON, when I count at all,
 First Poets — then the Sun —
 Then Summer — then the
 Heaven of God —
 And then the list is done.
 But looking back — the first so seems
 To comprehend the whole —
 The others look a needless show,
 So I write Poets — All.
 This summer lasts a solid year,
 They can afford a sun
 The East would deem
 Extravagant,
 And if the final Heaven
 Be beautiful as they disclose
 To those who trust in them,
 It is too difficult a grace
 To justify the dream.

THIS was a Poet —
 It is that
 Distills amazing sense
 From ordinary
 Meanings,
 And attars so immense
 From the familiar species
 That perished by the door,
 We wonder it was not
 Ourselves
 Arrested it before.

Of pictures the discloser —
 The Poet, it is he,
 Entitles us by contrast
 To ceaseless poverty.

Of portion so unconscious
 The robbing could not harm,
 Himself, to him, a fortune
 Exterior to Time.

STRONG draughts of their refreshing minds
 To drink, enables mine
 Through desert or the
 Wilderness,
 As bore it sealéd wine —
 To go elastic, or as One
 The camel's trait attained,
 How powerful the stimulus
 Of an hermetic mind !

WE miss a kinsman more
When warranted to see
Than when withheld by oceans
From possibility.

A furlong than a league
Inflicts a pricklier pain —
Till we, who smiled at Pyrenees,
Of parishes complain !

WHO giants know, with
 Lesser men
 Are incomplete and shy,
 For Greatness — that is ill at ease
 In minor company.

A smaller could not be perturbed,
 The summer gnat displays
 Unconscious that his single sail
 Does not comprise the sky.

GROWTH of Man like growth
Of Nature
Gravitates within,
Atmosphere and sun confirm it
But it stirs alone.

Each its difficult ideal
Must achieve itself,
Through the solitary prowess
Of a silent life.

Effort is the sole condition,
Patience of itself —
Patience of opposing forces,
And distinct belief.

Looking on is the department
Of its audience,
But transaction is assisted
By no countenance.

DOOM is the House Without the Door —
 'T is entered from the sun,
 And then the ladder's thrown away
 Because escape is done.

'T is varied by the dream
 Of what they do outside,
 When squirrels play and berries die —
 And hundreds bow to God.

EXPERIENCE is the angled road
 Preferred against the mind
 By paradox, the mind itself
 Presuming it to lead
 Quite opposite. How complicate
 The discipline of man,
 Compelling him to choose himself
 His pre-appointed pain.

I CAUTIOUS scanned my little life,
 I winnowed what would fade
 From what would last till heads like mine
 Should be a-dreaming laid.

I put the latter in a barn,
 The former blew away —
 I went one winter morning,
 And lo! my priceless hay

Was not upon the “scaffold”,
 Was not upon the “beam”,
 And from a thriving farmer
 A cynic I became.

Whether a thief did it —
 Whether it was the wind —
 Whether Deity’s guiltless
 My business is to find.

So I begin to ransack —
 How is it, Heart, with thee?
 Art thou within the little barn
 Love provided thee?

A BIRD is of all beings
The likest to the dawn,
An easy breeze does put afloat
The general Heavens upon.

It soars and shifts and whirls
And measures with the clouds
In easy, ever dazzling pace,
No different the birds —

Except a wake of music
Accompany their feet,
As should the Dawn emit a tune
For ecstasy of it.

A PRISON gets to be a friend;
Between its ponderous face
And ours a kinsmanship exists,
And in its narrow eyes
We come to look with gratitude
For the appointed beam
It deals us — stated as our food,
And hungered for the same.

We learn to know the planks
That answer to our feet,
So miserable a sound at first
Nor even now so sweet
As plashing in the pools
When memory was a boy,
But a demurer circuit,
A geometric joy.

The posture of the key
That interrupts the day
To our endeavor, — not so real
The cheek of Liberty
As this companion steel,
Whose features day and night
Are present to us as our own
And as escapeless quite.

The narrow round, the stint,
 The slow exchange of hope
 For something passiver, content
 Too steep for looking up,
 The liberty we knew
 Avoided like a dream,
 Too wide for any night but Heaven,
 If that indeed redeem.

WHO court obtain
 Within himself
 Sees every man a king;
 So poverty of monarchy
 Is an interior thing.

No fate depose
 Whom Fate ordain ---
 And who can add a crown
 To him who doth continual
 Repudiate his own?

THE child's faith is new,
 Whole — like his principle —
 Wide — like the sunrise
 On fresh eyes;
 Never had a doubt,
 Laughs at a scruple,
 Believes all sham
 But Paradise!

Audits the world —
 Deems his dominion
 Broadest of sovereignties,
 And Caesar mean
 By comparison,
 Baseless emperor,
 Ruler of naught,
 Yet swaying all!

Grown by and by
 To hold mistaken
 His pretty estimate
 Of prickly things,
 He gains the skill
 Sorrowful as certain,
Men to propitiate
 Instead of *kings*.

FOREVER is composed of Nows —
'T is not a different time,
Except for infiniteness
And latitude of home.

From this, experienced here,
Remove the dates to these,
Let months dissolve in further months,
And years exhale in years.

Without certificate or pause
Or celebrated days,
As infinite our years would be
As Anno Domini's.

(With a Daisy)

A SCIENCE — so the savants say,
 “Comparative Anatomy”,
 By which a single bone
 Is made a secret to unfold
 Of some rare tenant of the mold
 Else perished in the stone.
 So to the eye prospective led
 This meekest flower of the mead,
 Upon a winter’s day,
 Stands representative in gold
 Of rose and lily, marigold
 And countless butterfly !

To offer brave assistance
 To lives that stand alone
 When one has failed to stop them
 Is human, — but divine
 To lend an ample sinew
 Unto a *nameless* man
 Whose homely benediction
 No other cared to earn.

DRAMA'S vitalest expression
 Is the Common Day
 That arises, sets, about us :
 Other tragedy
 Perish in the recitation,
 This the more exert
 When the audience is scattered,
 And the boxes shut.

Hamlet to himself were Hamlet
 Had not Shakespeare wrote,
 Though the Romeo leave no second
 Of his Juliet,
 It were tenderer enacted
 In the human heart —
 Only theater recorded
 Owner cannot shut.

A SECRET told
Ceases to be a secret then.
A secret kept —
That can appal but one.
Better of it continual be afraid,
Than it
And whom you told it to
Beside.

II DWELL in Possibility
A fairer house than Prose,
More numerous of windows,
Superior of doors.

Of chambers, as the cedars —
Impregnable of eye;
And for an everlasting roof
The gables of the sky.

Of visitors — the fairest —
For occupation — this —
The spreading wide my narrow hands
To gather Paradise.

EXPECTATION is contentment;
 Gain, satiety.
 But satiety, conviction
 Of necessity.

Of an austere trait in pleasure.
 Good, without alarm,
 Is a too serene possession —
 Danger deepens suns.

SHE dealt her pretty
Words like blades ;
As glittering they shone,
And every one unbared
A nerve
Or wantoned with a bone.

She never deemed she hurt ;
That is not steel's
Affair.
A vulgar grimace in
The flesh
How ill the creatures bear !

To ache is human, not
Polite ;
The film upon the eye
Mortality's old custom —
Just locking up to die.

REVOLUTION is the pod
Systems rattle from ;
When the winds of
Will are stirred,
Excellent is bloom.

But except its russet
Base
Every summer be
The entomber of itself ;
So of Liberty.

Left inactive on the
Stalk,
All its purple fled,
Revolution shakes it
For
Test if it be dead.

I'VE known a Heaven like a tent
 To wrap its shining yards,
 Pluck up its stakes and disappear
 Without the sound of boards
 Or rip of nail, or carpenter,
 But just the miles of stare
 That signalize a show's retreat
 In North America.
 No trace, no figment of the thing
 That dazzled yesterday,
 No ring, no marvel;
 Men and feats
 Dissolved as utterly
 As birds' far navigation
 Discloses just a hue;
 A plash of oars — a gayety,
 Then swallowed up to view.

WE see comparatively.
 The thing so towering high
 We could not grasp its segment
 Unaided yesterday.

This morning's finer verdict
 Makes scarcely worth the toil —
 A furrow our Cordillera,
 Our Apennines a knoll.

A STILL volcano — Life —
That flickered in the night
When it was dark enough to show
Without endangering sight.

A quiet, earthquake style,
Too smoldering to suspect
By natures this side Naples.
The North cannot detect

The solemn, torrid symbol,
The lips that never lie,
Whose hissing corals part and shut
And cities slip away.

Therefore we do Life's labor
Tho' Life's reward be done —
With scrupulous exactness
To hold our senses on.

To make routine
A stimulus,
Remember it can cease —
Capacity to terminate
Is a specific
Grace.

TWO

IT'S easy to invent a life,
 God does it every day —
 Creation but a gambol
 Of His authority.

It's easy to efface it,
 The thrifty Deity
 Could scarce afford eternity
 To spontaneity.

The Perished Patterns murmur,
 But His perturbless plan
 Proceed — inserting here
 A Sun —
 There — leaving out a Man.

THE sweetest heresy received
That man and woman know,
Each other's convert —
Though the faith accommodate but two.

The churches are so frequent,
The ritual so small,
The Grace so unavoidable,
To fail — is infidel.

I NEVER felt at home below,
 And in the handsome skies
 I shall not feel at home
 I know,
 I don't like Paradise.

Because it's Sunday all the time
 And recess never comes,
 And Eden'll be so lonesome
 Bright Wednesday afternoons.

If God could make a visit,
 Or ever took a nap —
 So not to see us — but they say
 Himself a telescope

Perennial beholds us, —
 Myself would run away
 From Him and Holy Ghost and All —
 But — there's the Judgment Day!

OF course I prayed —
 And did God care?
 He cared as much as
 On the air
 A bird had stamped her foot
 And cried “Give me!”

My reason, life
 I had not had, but for
 Yourself,
 'Twere better charity
 To leave me in the atom's
 Tomb,
 Merry and nought, and gay
 And numb,
 Than this smart misery.

I PRAYED at first — a little girl —
Because they told me to,
But stopped when qualified to guess
How prayer would sound to me

If I supposed God looked around
Each time my childish eye
Fixed full and steady on His own
In solemn honesty —

And told Him what I'd like to-day,
And parts of His far plan
That baffled me — the underside
Of His divinity.

And often since in danger
I count the force 't would be
To have a God so strong as that,
To hold my life for me,

Till I could catch the balance
That slips so easily ;
It takes me all the while to poise,
And then it does n't stay.

IT always felt to me a wrong
To that old Moses done,
To let him see the Canaan
Without the entering.

And though in soberer moments
No Moses there can be,
I'm satisfied the romance
In point of injury

Surpasses sharper stated
Of Stephen or of Paul;
For these were only put to death,
While God's adroiter will

On Moses seemed to fasten
In tantalizing play —
As Boy should deal
With lesser Boy
To show supremacy.

The fault was doubtless
Israel's;
Myself had banned the Tribes,
And ushered grand old Moses
In pentateuchal robes

Upon the broad possession
But titled him to see.
Old Man on Nebo! Late as this
One Justice bleeds for thee!

MY period had come for prayer,
 No other art would do,
 My tactics missed a rudiment;
 Creator, was it you?

God grows above, so those who pray
 Horizons must ascend,
 And so I stood upon the North
 To reach this curious Friend.

His house was not; no sign had He
 By chimney nor by door, —
 Could I infer His residence?
 Wide prairies of the air

Unbroken by a settler,
 Were all that I could see;
 Infinitude, hadst Thou no face
 That I might look at Thee?

The silence condescended,
 The Heavens paused for me,
 But awed beyond my errand
 I worshiped — did not pray!

WE pray to Heaven,
 We prate of Heaven —
 Relate when neighbors die,
 At what o'clock to Heaven
 They fled.
 Who saw them wherefore fly?

Is Heaven a place, and Sky a face?
 Location's narrow way
 Is for ourselves;
 Unto the Dead
 There's no geography.

“UNTO Me?”

“I do not know you —
Where may be your house?”

“I am Jesus — late of
Judea,
Now of Paradise.”

“Wagons have you, to
Convey me?
This is far from thence” —

“Arms of mine sufficient
Phaeton,
Trust Omnipotence.”

“I am spotted.”

“I am Pardon.”

“I am small.”

“The least
Is esteemed in Heaven
The chiefest.
Occupy my house.”

TOO much of proof affronts
Belief.

The Turtle will not try
Unless you leave him ;
Then return —
And he has hauled away.

THREE

THE Sun went down —
 No man looked on;
 The Earth and I alone
 Were present at the majesty,
 He triumphed and went on.

The Sun went up —
 No man looked on,
 The Earth and I and One —
 A nameless bird, a stranger,
 Were witness for the Crown.

THE tint I cannot take is best,
The color too remote
That I could show it in bazaar
A guinea at a sight —

The fine impalpable array
That swaggers on the eye
Like Cleopatra's company
Repeated in the sky —

The moments of dominion
That happen on the Soul
And leave it with a discontent
Too exquisite to tell —

The eager look on landscapes
As if they just repressed
Some secret that was pushing,
Like chariots, in the breast —

The pleading of the Summer,
That other prank of snow
That covers mystery with tulle
For fear the squirrels know —

Their graspless manners mock us,
Until the cheated eye
Shuts arrogantly in the grave,
Another way to see.

HEAVEN has different signs to me;
 Sometimes I think that noon
 Is but a symbol of the place,
 And when again at dawn

A mighty look runs round the world
 And settles in the hills,
 An awe if it should be like that
 Upon the ignorance steals.

The orchard when the sun is on;
 The triumph of the birds
 When they together victory make;
 Some carnivals of clouds —

The rapture of concluded day
 Returning to the West, —
 All these remind us of the place
 That men call "Paradise."

Itself a fairer we suppose,
 But how ourself shall be
 Adorned for a superior grace,
 Not yet our eyes can see.

THE rainbow never tells me
That gust and storm are by;
Yet is she more convincing
Than philosophy.

My flowers turn from forums,
Yet eloquent declare
What Cato couldn't prove to me
Except the birds were here!

BEAUTY is not caused,
It is.
Chase it and it ceases.
Chase it not and it abides.
Overtake the creases
In the meadow when
The Wind
Runs his fingers thro' it?
Deity will see to it
That you never do it.

MY faith is larger than the hills,
 So when the hills decay,
 My faith must take the purple wheel
 To show the Sun the way.

'Tis first he steps upon the vane
 And then upon the hill;
 And then abroad the world he goes
 To do his golden will.

And if his yellow feet should miss,
 The birds would not arise,
 The flowers would slumber on their stems, —
 No bells have Paradise.

How dare I therefore stint a faith
 On which so vast depends,
 Lest Firmament should fail for me —
 The rivet in the bands.

WITHIN my garden rides a bird
 Upon a single wheel,
 Whose spokes a dizzy music make
 As 't were a traveling mill.

He never stops, but slackens
 Above the ripest rose,
 Partakes without alighting,
 And praises as he goes ;

Till every spice is tasted,
 And then his fairy gig
 Reels in remoter atmospheres,
 And I rejoin my dog.

And he and I perplex us
 If positive 't were we —
 Or bore the garden in the brain
 This curiosity ?

But he, the best logician,
 Refers my duller eye
 To just vibrating blossoms —
 An exquisite reply !

THE Robin's my criterion of tune
 Because I grow where robins do —
 But were I Cuckoo born
 I'd swear by him —
 The ode familiar rules the morn.
 The Buttercup's my whim
 For bloom —
 Because we're orchard-sprung —
 But were I Britain-born
 I'd daisies spurn —
 None but the Nut October fits
 Because through dropping it
 The seasons flit, I'm taught.
 Without the snow's tableau
 Winter were lie to me —
 Because I see New Englandly.
 The Queen discerns like me
 Provincially.

WE — Bee and I — live
 In the quaffing.
 'Tisn't all hock with us,
 Life has its ale —
 But it's many a lay of
 The dim Burgundy
 We chant for cheer when
 The wines fail.
 Do we "get drunk?"
 Ask the jolly clovers!
 Do we "beat our wife?"
 I never wed.
 Bee pledges *his* in minutest
 Flagons,
 Dainty as the tress on her
 Deft head.
 While runs the Rhine
 He and I revel —
 First at the vat and
 Latest at the vine;
 Noon — our last cup.
 "Found dead of nectar"
 By a humming Coroner
 In a by-thyme.

A FUZZY fellow without feet
 Yet doth exceeding run !
 Of velvet is his countenance
 And his complexion dun.

Sometimes he dwelleth in the grass,
 Sometimes upon a bough
 From which he doth descend in plush
 Upon the passer-by.

All this in summer —
 But when winds alarm the forest folk,
 He taketh damask residence
 And struts in sewing silk.

Then, finer than a lady,
 Emerges in the spring,
 A feather on each shoulder —
 You'd scarce accredit him.

By men yclept a caterpillar —
 By me — but who am I
 To tell the pretty secret
 Of the Butterfly !

IF Nature smiles — the Mother must,
I'm sure, at many a whim
Of her eccentric family —
Is she so much to blame?

TO intercept his yellow plan
 The sun does not allow
 Caprices of the atmosphere;
 And even when the snow

Heaves balls of specks like vicious boy
 Directly in his eye,
 Does not so much as turn his head —
 Busy with majesty!

'Tis his to stimulate the earth,
 And magnetize the sea,
 And bind astronomy in place —
 Yet any passer-by

Would deem Ourselves the busier,
 As the minutest bee
 That rides supports a thunder,
 A bomb to justify!

BY my window have I for scenery
 Just a sea with a stem —
 If the bird and the farmer deem it a “Pine”,
 The opinion will serve for them.

It has no “Port”, nor a “Line”, but the jays
 That split their route to the sky,
 Or a squirrel whose giddy peninsular
 May be easier gained this way.

For inlands the Earth is the underside
 And the upper side is the Sun,
 And its commerce — if commerce it have —
 Of spice, I infer from the odors borne.

Of its voice to affirm, when the wind is within
 Can the dumb divulge the Divine?
 The definition of melody is
 That definition is none.

It suggests to our faith, they suggest to our sight, —
 When the latter is put away,
 I shall meet with conviction I somewhere met
 That Immortality.

Was the Pine at my
 Window a “Fellow”
 Of the Royal Infinity?
 Apprehensions are God’s
 Introductions
 Extended inscrutably.

OUT of sight? What of that?
 See the bird reach it!
 Curve on curve, sweep on sweep,
 Round the steep air.
 Danger! What is that to her?
 Better 'tis to fail there
 Than debate here.

Blue is blue the world through,
 Amber, amber; dew, dew.
 Seek friend, and see —
 Heaven is sky of earth
 That's all —
 Bashful Heaven, thy lovers small
 Hide too, from thee.

WHEN they come back,
 If Blossoms do —
 I always feel a doubt
 If Blossoms can be
 Born again
 When once the art
 Is out.

When they begin,
 If Robins may —
 I always had a fear
 I did not tell, it
 Was their last
 Experiment
 Last year.

When it is May,
 If May return —
 Had nobody a pang
 Lest on a face so beautiful
 He might not look again ?

If I am there —
 One does not know
 What party one may be
 To-morrow, — but if I *am*
 There
 I take back all I say !

(With Flowers)

I'VE nothing else to bring, you know,
 So I keep bringing these —
 Just as the night keeps fetching stars
 To our familiar eyes.
 Maybe we shouldn't mind them
 Unless they didn't come —
 Then maybe it would puzzle us
 To find our way home.

I'M the little "Hearts' Ease!"
 I don't care for pouting skies!
 If the butterfly delay
 Can I therefore stay away?

If the coward bumblebee
 In his chimney-corner stay,
 I must resoluter be;
 Who'll apologize for me?

Dear old-fashioned little flower,
 Eden is old-fashioned too!
 Birds are antiquated fellows,
 Heaven does not change her blue —
 Nor may you, the little "Hearts' Ease",
 Ever be induced to do.

(With a Flower)

I PAY in satin cash —
You did not state your price,
A petal for a paragraph
Is near as I can guess.

WHAT I can do — I will,
Though it be little as a
Daffodil.
What I cannot, must be
Unknown to possibility.

(Sent with a Flower)

DEFRAUDED I
A butterfly —
The lawful heir —
For thee.

COULD I do more for thee
Wert thou a bumblebee —
Since for the Queen have I
Nought but bouquet ?

THESE are the signs to Nature's inns,
 Her invitation broad
 For whomsoever famishing
 To taste her mystic bread.

These are the rites of Nature's house,
 The hospitality
 That opens with an equal width
 To beggar or to bee.

For sureties of her staunch estate,
 Her undecaying cheer,
 The purple in the East is set
 And in the North, the star.

SUNSET at night is natural,
But sunset in the dawn
Reverses Nature, Master,
So midnight due at noon.

Eclipses be predicted
And Science bows them in,
But so one face us suddenly —
Jehovah's watch is wrong.

THROUGH the dark sod
 As education
 The Lily passes sure,
 Feels her white foot no
 Trepidation,
 Her faith no fear.

Afterward in the meadow
 Swinging her beryl bell,
 The mold-life all
 Forgotten now —
 In ecstasy and dell.

DELIGHT is as the flight,
Or in the ratio of it
As the schools would say.
The rainbow's way
A skein
Flung colored after rain
Would suit as bright,
Except that flight
Were aliment.

"If it would last?"
I asked the East
When that bent stripe
Struck up my childish
Firmament,
And I for glee
Took rainbows as the common
Way,
And empty skies
The eccentricity.

And so with lives ;
And so with butterflies
Seen magic, through
The fright
That they will cheat the sight
And dower latitudes far on
Some sudden morn,
Our portion in the fashion
Done.

THE mountains grow unnoticed,
 Their purple figures rise
 Without attempt, exhaustion,
 Assistance or applause.

In their eternal faces
 The sun with broad delight
 Looks long — and last,
 And golden,
 For fellowship at night.

FOR every bird a nest,
Wherefore in timid quest
Some little wren goes seeking round.

Wherefore where boughs are free,
Households in every tree,
Pilgrim be found ?

Perhaps a home too high —
Ah, aristocracy ! —
The little wren desires.

The lark is not ashamed
To build upon the ground
Her modest house.

Yet who of all the throng
Dancing around the sun
Does so rejoice ?

(With a flower)

ALL the letters I can write
 Are not fair as this,
 Syllables of velvet,
 Sentences of plush,
 Depths of ruby, undrained,
 Hid, lip, for thee —
 Play it were a humming bird
 And just sipped me !

MOST she touched me
 By her muteness ;
 Most she won me
 By the way
 She presented her small
 Figure —
 Plea for charity.
 Were a crumb my whole
 Possession,
 Were there famine in
 The land,
 Were it my resource
 From starving,
 Could I such a face
 Withstand ?
 Not upon her knee
 To thank me
 Sank this Beggar
 From the sky,
 But the crumb partook,
 Departed,
 And returned on high
 I supposed, when sudden —
 Such a praise began,
 'Twas as Space sat singing
 To herself and Man.
 'Twas the wingéd Beggar
 Afterward I learned,
 To her benefactor
 Paying gratitude.

HOW many flowers fail in wood,
Or perish from the hill
Without the privilege to know
That they are beautiful !

How many cast a nameless pod
Upon the nearest breeze,
Unconscious of the scarlet freight
It bears to other eyes !

AUTUMN overlooked my knitting;
 "Dyes," said he, "have I
 Could dishonor a flamingo."
 "Give them me," said I.

Cochineal I chose for
 Deeming
 It resemble thee —
 And the little border dusker —
 That resembles me.

OH, Shadow on the Grass!
Art thou a step,
Or not?

Go make thee fair,
My candidate,
My nominated Heart!

Oh, Shadow on the Grass!
While I delayed
To guess,
Some other thou
Didst consecrate,
Oh, unelected
Face!

THE last of summer is delight
 Deterred by retrospect,
 'Tis ecstasy's revealed review,
 Enchantment's syndicate.

To meet it, nameless as it is,
 Without celestial mail,
 Audacious as without a knock
 To walk within the vale.

CONJECTURING a climate
 Of unsuspended suns
 Gives poignancy to Winter;
 The freezing fancy turns
 To a fictitious country
 To palliate a cold
 Not obviated of degree
 Nor eased of latitude.

FOUR

ALL but Death can be
Adjusted ;
Dynasties repaired,
Systems settled in their
Sockets,
Centuries removed, —

Wastes of lives resown
With colors
By superior springs,
Death — unto itself exception —
Is exempt from change.

How noteless men and
Pleiads stand
Until a sudden sky
Reveals the fact that one is wrapt
Forever from the eye.

Members of the Invisible,
Existing while we stare
In leagueless opportunity
O'er-take-less as the air.

Why didn't we detain them?
The Heavens with a smile
Sweep by our disappointed
Heads,
But deign no syllable.

TO fill a gap —
Insert the thing that caused it.
Block it up
With other and 't will yawn
The more;
You cannot solder an abyss
With air.

NOT any more to be lacked,
 Not any more to be known —
 Denizens of
 Significance
 For a span so worn —
 Even Nature, Herself,
 Has forgot it is there —
 Too elate of her multitudes
 To retain despair.

Of the ones that pursued it
 Suing it not to go —
 Some have solaced the longing
 To accompany;

Some rescinded the wrench —
 Others — shall I say?
 Plated the residue of
 Woe
 With monotony.

I ROSE because he sank.
 I thought it would be
 Opposite,
 But when his power bent,
 My Soul stood straight.
 I told him Best must pass
 Through this low arch of
 Flesh;
 No casque so brave
 It spurn the grave —
 I told him worlds I knew
 Where monarchs grew
 Who recollected us
 If we were true.
 And so with thews of hymn
 And sinew from within,
 In ways I knew not that
 I knew, till then —
 I lifted him.

IT feels a shame to be
 Alive
 When men so brave are dead.
 One envies the distinguished
 Dust
 Permitted such a head ;
 The stone that tells defending
 Whom
 This Spartan put away
 What little of him we
 Possessed
 In pawn for liberty.
 The price is great, sublimely
 Paid,
 Do we deserve a thing —
 That lives, like dollars,
 Must be piled
 Before we may obtain ?
 Are we that wait sufficient
 Worth,
 That such enormous pearl
 As Life should be dissolved
 For us
 In battle's horrid bowl ?
 It may be a renown
 To live ;
 I think the men who die —
 Those unsustained Saviors —
 Present Divinity.

THE doomed regard the sunrise
With different delight
Because when next it burns abroad
They doubt to witness it.

The man to die to-morrow
Detects the meadow bird,
Because its music stirs
The axe
That clamors for his head.

Joyful to whom the sunrise
Precedes enamored day —
Joyful for whom the meadow bird
Has aught but elegy !

It is dead. Find it —
Out of sound, out of sight.
“Happy?” Which is wiser,
Sun or the wind?
“Conscious?” Won’t you ask that
Of the low ground?

“Homesick?” Many met it —
Even through them, this
Cannot testify —
Themselves dumb.

MIDSUMMER was it when they died,
A full and perfect time ;
The summer closed upon itself
In consummated bloom.

The corn her furthest kernel filled
Before the coming flail,
When these leaned into perfectness
Through haze of burial.

THREE times we parted,
 Breath and I —
 Three times He would not go
 But stood to stir the
 Flickering fan
 The waters strove to stay.

Three times the billows tossed
 Me up,
 Then caught me like a ball,
 Then made blue faces in *my*
 Face —
 And pushed away a sail

That crawled leagues off,
 I liked to see
 For thinking, while I die,
 How pleasant to
 Behold a thing
 Where human faces be.

The waves grew sleepy ;
 Breath did not ;
 The winds like children lulled ;
 The sunrise kissed my
 Chrysalis —
 And I stood up and lived.

WE talked as girls do,
Fond and late —
We speculated fair, on
Every subject but the grave,
Of ours — none affair.

We handled destinies as cool
As we disposers be,
And God a quiet party
To our authority.

But fondest dwelt upon
Ourselves,
As we eventual be,
When girls to women softly
Raised,
We occupy Degree.

We parted with a contract
To recollect — and write —
But Heaven made both
Impossible
Before another night.

'T WAS warm at first like us,
Until there crept thereon
A chill, like frost upon a glass
Till all the scene be gone.

The forehead copied stone,
The fingers grew too cold
To ache, and like a skater's brook
The busy eyes congealed.

It straightened — that was all.
It crowded cold to cold —
It multiplied indifference
As Pride were all it could.

And even when with cords
'T was lowered like a freight,
It made no signal, nor demurred,
But dropped like adamant.

THESE fair, fictitious people,
The women plucked away
From our familiar notice,
The men of ivory —

These boys and girls in canvas
Who dwell upon the wall
In everlasting childhood,
Where are they — can you tell?

Perhaps in places perfecter,
Inheriting delight
Beyond our small conjecture,
Our scanty estimate.

Remembering ourselves, we trust,
But blessedder than we,
Through knowing where we only hope —
Receiving — where we pray.

Of expectation also —
Anticipating us
With transport that would be a pain,
Except for Holiness —
Esteeming us, as exiles,
Themselves admitted home
Through gentle miracle of Death
The way ourselves must come.

'T WAS the old road
Through pain,
That unfrequented one
With many a turn and thorn
That stops at Heaven.

This was the town
She passed ;
There, where she rested last,
Then stepped more fast,
The little tracks close pressed.

Then — not so swift,
Slow — slow — as feet did
Weary go,
Then stopped — no other track.

Wait ! Look ! Her little book,
The leaf at love turned back,
The very hat
And this worn shoe
Just fits the track —
Herself, though — fled.

Another bed, a short one
Women make to-night
In chambers bright,
Too out of sight, though,
For our hoarse Good Night
To touch her hand.

DON'T put up my thread and needle,
I'll begin to sew
When the birds begin to whistle,
Better stitches so.

These were bent, my sight got crooked.
When my mind is plain
I'll do seams a Queen's endeavor
Would not blush to own.

Hems too fine for lady's tracing
To the sightless knot,
Tucks of dainty interspersion
Like a dotted dot.

Leave my needle in the furrow,
When I put it down —
I can make the zigzag stitches
Straight, when I am strong.

Till then, dreaming I am sewing,
Fetch the seam I missed
Closer, so I, at my sleeping,
Still surmise I stitch.

OF nearness to her sundered things
 The Soul has special times,
 When Dimness looks the oddity,
 Distinctness easy seems.

The shapes we buried dwell about.
 Familiar in the rooms,
 Untarnished by the sepulcher
 Our moldering playmate comes

In just the jacket that he wore,
 Long buttoned in the mold,
 Since we, old mornings, children played,
 Divided by a world.

The grave yields back her robberies,
 The years are pilfered things,
 Bright knots of apparitions
 Salute us with their wings —

As we it were that perished,
 Themselves had just remained
 Till we rejoin them,
 And 'twas They, and not Ourselves
 That mourned.

YOU'LL find it when you come to die
The easier to let go,
For recollecting such as went
You could not spare, you know.

And though their places somewhat filled —
As did their marble names
With moss — they never grew so full
You chose the newer times.

And when this world sets further back,
As dying say it does,
The former love distincter grows
And supersedes the fresh.

And thought of them so fair invites,
It looks too tawdry grace
To stay behind with just the toys
We bought to ease their place.

LIFE is what we make it,
 Death we do not know ;
 Christ's acquaintance with him
 Justifies him, though.

He would trust no stranger,
 Other could betray,
 Just His own endorsement
 That sufficeth me.

All the other distance
 He hath traversed first,
 No new mile remaineth
 Far as Paradise.

His sure feet preceding,
 Tender Pioneer —
 Base must be the cowards
 Dare not venture now.

WHY make it doubt — it hurts it so —
 So sick to guess
 So strong to know —
 So brave upon its little bed
 To tell the very last they said
 Unto Itself — and smile and shake
 For that dear, distant, dangerous sake.
 But, the Instead —
 The pinching fear
 That something it did do or dare
 Offend the Vision, and it flee,
 And They no more remember me
 Nor ever turn to tell me why —
 Oh, Master ! this is misery !

HEAVEN is so far of the mind
That were the mind dissolved,
The site of it by architect
Could not again be proved.

'Tis vast as our capacity
As fair as our idea,
To him of adequate desire
No further 't is than Here.

THE world feels dusty
 When we stop to die;
 We want the dew then,
 Honors taste dry.

Flags vex a dying face,
 But the least fan
 Stirred by a friend's hand
 Cools like the rain.

Mine be the ministry
 When thy thirst comes,
 Dews of thyself to fetch
 And holy balms.

IT'S coming — the postponeless Creature,
 It gains the block and now
 It gains the door,
 Chooses its latch from all
 The other fastenings,
 Enters with a — "You know me, Sir?"
 Simple salute and certain
 Recognition,
 Bold — were it enemy — brief
 Were it friend,
 Dresses each house in
 Crêpe and icicle,
 And carries one out of it
 To God.

NO crowd that has occurred
Exhibit, I suppose,
The general attendance
That Resurrection does.

Circumference be free,
The long-subjected Grave
Assert his primogeniture,
The Dust adjust and live.

On atoms features place,
All multitudes that were
Efface in the comparison,
As suns annul a star.

Solemnity prevail,
Its individual doom
Possess each separate consciousness,
August, resistless, dumb.

What duplicate exist —
What parallel can be —
Of the stupendousness of this
To universe and me?

OVER and over, like a tune
 The recollection plays.
 Drums of the phantom battlements,
 Cornets of Paradise !

Snatches from baptized generations,
 Cadences too grand
 But for the Justified
 Processions
 At the Lord's right hand.

FIVE

THE only news I know
Is bulletins all day
From Immortality.

The only shows I see
To-morrow and To-day,
Perchance Eternity.

The only One I meet
Is God, — the only street
Existence, this traversed

If other news there be,
Or admirabler show —
I'll tell it you.*

* This poem was made from the first three lines which were included in a letter sent to Colonel Higginson. See page 262, "Life and Letters of Emily Dickinson."

THE soul's distinct
 Connection
 With immortality
 Is best disclosed
 By danger,
 Or quick calamity.

As lightning on
 A landscape
 Exhibits sheets of place
 Not yet suspected but
 For flash and bolt and suddenness.

CONSCIOUS am I in my chamber
Of a shapeless friend,
He doth not attest by posture
Nor confirm by word.

Neither place need I present him,
Fitter courtesy
Hospitable intuition
Of his company.

Presence is his furthest license,
Neither he to me
Nor myself to him by accent
Forfeit probity.

Weariness of him were quainter
Than monotony
Knew a particle of space's
Vast society.

Neither if he visit Other —
Does he dwell — or nay —
Know I,
But instinct reports Him
Immortality.

PAIN expands the time,
Ages coil within
The minute circumference
Of a single brain.

Pain contracts the time
Occupied with shot
Triplets of eternities
Are as they were not.

THE admirations and
 Contempts of time
 Show justest through
 An open tomb —
 The dying, as it were
 A height,
 Reorganizes estimate,
 And what we saw
 Not —
 We distinguish clear,
 And mostly see not
 What we saw before.
 'Tis compound vision —
 Light enabling light —
 The Finite furnished
 With the Infinite —
 Convex and concave witness,
 Back toward time,
 And forward toward
 The God of Him.

HAD I presumed to hope.
The loss had been to me
A value for the Greatness'
Sake,
As giants gone away.

Had I presumed to gain
A favor so remote,
The failure but confirm the
Grace
In further Infinite.

'Tis failure not of Hope
But diligent Despair
Advancing on celestial lists
With faint terrestrial power —

'Tis Honor — though I die
For that no man obtain
Till he be justified by Death —
This is the second gain !

It was not Saint,
It was too large —
Nor Snow — it was
Too small.
It only held itself
Aloof
Like something spiritual.

MY soul accused me
And I quailed
As tongue of diamond
Had reviled.

All else accused me
And I smiled,
My soul that morning
Was my friend.

Her favor is the best
Disdain
Toward artifice of Time
Or Men,
But her disdain — 't were
Cooler bear
A finger of enameled fire!

ME from Myself to banish
Had I art,
Impregnable my fortress
Unto foreign heart.

But since Myself assault Me
How have I peace,
Except by subjugating
Consciousness?

And since We're mutual
Monarch,
How this be
Except by abdication
Me — or Me?

ITS Hour with itself
 The Spirit never shows,
 What terror would enthrall the street
 Could countenance disclose
 The subterranean freight,
 The cellars of the soul,
 Thank God the loudest place He made
 Is licensed to be still !

THE battle fought between the Soul
And No Man is the one
Of all the battles prevalent
By far the greater one.

No news of it is had abroad;
Its bodiless campaign
Establishes and terminates,
Invisible, Unknown.

Nor History record it,
As legions of a night
The sunrise scatters, — these
Endure,
Enact, and terminate.

MY portion is defeat to-day,
 A paler luck than victory,
 Less pæans, fewer bells —
 The drums don't follow me with tunes;
 Defeat a something dumber means,
 More difficult than bells.
 'Tis populous with bone and stain,
 And men too straight to bend again,
 And piles of solid moan,
 And chips of blank in boyish eyes,
 And shreds of prayer
 And death's surprise
 Stamped visible in stone.
 There's something prouder
 Over there —
 The trumpets tell it in the air.
 How different victory
 To him who has it and
 The One
 Who to have had it
 Would have been
 Contenteder to die.

SUSPENSE is hostiler than Death.
 Death, tho' soever broad,
 Is just Death, and cannot increase —
 Suspense does not conclude,
 But perishes to live anew,
 But just anew to die,
 Annihilation plated fresh
 With Immortality.

ON a columnar self
How ample to rely ;
In tumult or extremity
How good the certainty

That lever cannot pry,
And wedge cannot divide
Conviction, that the granite
Base,
Though none be on our side.

Suffice us, for a crowd,
Ourselves — and rectitude —
And that companion
Not far off
From furthest good man —
God.

FAITH is the pierless bridge
Supporting what we see
Unto the scene that we do not,
Too slender for the eye.

It bears the soul as bold
As it were rocked in steel,
With arms of steel
At either side
It joins behind the rail —

To what — could we presume —
The bridge would cease to be —
To our far vacillating feet
A first necessity.

THE lonesome for they know not what —
 The Eastern exiles be,
 Who strayed beyond the amber line
 Some madder holiday.

And ever since the purple West
 They strive to climb in vain —
 As birds that tremble from the clouds
 Do fumble at the strain
 The blessed ether taught them
 Some transatlantic morn,
 When heaven was too common to miss,
 Too sure to dote upon.

INCONCEIVABLY solemn,
Things too gay
Pierce by the very press
Of imagery.

Their far parades
Halt on the eye
With a mute pomp,
A pleading pageantry.

Flags are a brave sight,
But no true eye
Ever went by one
Steadily.

Music's triumphant,
But a fine ear
Aches with delight
The drums to hear.

I SHOULD not dare to be so sad
So many years again.
A load is first impossible
When we have put it down.

The Superhuman then withdraws,
And we who never saw
The Giant at the other side
Begin to perish now.

SIX

I TOOK one draught of life,
I'll tell you what I paid,
Precisely an existence —
The market price, they said.

They weighed me, dust by dust,
They balanced film with film,
Then handed me my being's worth —
A single dram of Heaven.

SO the eyes accost and sunder
 In an audience,
 Stamped in instances forever,
 So may countenance
 Entertain without addressing
 Countenance of One
 In a neighboring horizon,
 Gone as soon as known.

It was a quiet way
He asked if I was his.
I made no answer of the
Tongue,
But answer of the eyes.

And then he bore me high
Before this mortal noise,
With swiftmess as of chariots
And distance as of wheels.

The world did drop away
As countries from the feet
Of him that leaneth in
Balloon
Upon an ether street.

The gulf behind was not —
The continents were new.
Eternity it was — before
Eternity was due.

No seasons were to us ;
It was not night nor
Noon ;
For sunrise stopped upon
The place
And fastened it in dawn.

THE Heart is the capital
Of the Mind,
The Mind is a single State.
The Heart and the Mind
Together make
A single continent.

One — is the population —
Numerous enough.
This ecstatic nation
Seek — it is
Yourself.

I MAKE his crescent fill or lack,
 His nature is at full
 Or quarter — as I signify,
 His tides do I control.

He holds superior in the sky
 Or gropes at my command
 Behind inferior clouds,
 Or round a mist's slow colonnade.

But since we hold a mutual disc
 And front a mutual day,
 Which is the despot neither knows —
 Nor whose the tyranny.

I CAME to buy a smile to-day
 But just a single smile,
 The smallest one upon your cheek
 Will suit me just as well,
 The one that no one else would miss
 It shone so very small —
 I'm pleading at the counter, Sir,
 Could you afford to sell?

I've diamonds on my fingers —
 You know what diamonds are!
 I've rubies like the evening blood,
 And topaz like the star!

'T would be a bargain for a Jew —
 Say, may I have it, Sir?

|| TEND my flowers for thee,
Bright Absentee!
My fuchsia's coral seams
Rip, while the sower dreams.

Geraniums tint and spot,
Low daisies dot,
My cactus splits a beard
To show its throat.

Carnations tip their spice
And bees pick up.
A hyacinth I hid
Puts out a ruffled head,
And odors fall
From flasks so small
You marvel how they held.

Globe roses break their
Satin flake
Upon my garden floor,
Yet Thou not there —
I had as lief they bore
 No crimson more.
Thy flower be gay
Her Lord away!

It ill becometh me.
I'll dwell in calyx gray
How modestly, alway
Thy daisy,
Draped for Thee.

ONE Life of so much consequence
 That I for it would pay
 My Soul's entire income
 In ceaseless salary.
 One pearl of such proportion
 That I would instant dive
 Although I *knew* to take it
 Would cost me just a life.
 The sea is full — I know it!
 That does not blur my gem!
 It burns distinct from all the row
 Intact in diadem!
 Oh, Life is thick — I know it!
 Yet not so dense a crowd
 But monarchs are perceptible
 Far down the dustiest road!

MY life had stood a loaded gun
In corners, till a day
The owner passed — identified,
And carried me away.

And now we roam the sov'reign woods,
And now we hunt the doe —
And every time I speak for him
The mountains straight reply.

And do I smile, such cordial light
Upon the valley glow —
It is as a Vesuvian face
Had let its pleasure through.

And when at night, our good day done,
I guard my master's head,
'Tis better than the eider duck's
Deep pillow to have shared.

To foe of his I'm deadly foe,
None stir the second time
On whom I lay a yellow eye
Or an emphatic thumb.

Though I than he may longer live,
He longer must than I,
For I have but the art to kill —
Without the power to die.

I CANNOT be ashamed
Because I cannot see
The love you offer.
Magnitude
Reverses modesty.

And I cannot be proud
Because a height so high
Involves Alpine
Requirements,
And services of snow.

LOVE, thou art high,
 I cannot climb thee,
 But, were it two,
 Who knows but we
 Taking turns at the Chimbarazu
 Ducal at last, stand up
 By thee?

Love, thou art deep,
 I cannot cross thee,
 But were there two
 Instead of one,
 Rower and yacht some
 Sov'reign summer,
 Who knows but we'd
 Reach the sun?

Love, thou art veiled,
 A few behold thee —
 Smile and alter and prattle
 And die.
 Bliss were an oddity
 Without thee,
 Nicknamed by God
 Eternity.

EMPTY my heart of thee —
 Its single artery,
 Begin to leave thee out —
 Simply extinction's date.

Much billow hath the sea,
 One Baltic — they.
 Subtract thyself, in play,
 And not enough of me
 Is left to put away —
 "Myself" meant thee.

Erase the root, no tree;
 Thee — then no me —
 The Heavens stripped,
 Eternity's wide pocket picked.

THE love a life can show
 Below,
 Is but a filament, I know,
 Of that diviner thing
 That faints upon the face
 Of noon
 And smites the tinder in
 The sun,
 And hinders Gabriel's wing.

'Tis this in music hints
 And sways,
 And far abroad on
 Summer days
 Distills uncertain pain.
 'Tis this enamors in
 The East,
 And tints the transit in
 The West
 With harrowing iodine.
 'Tis this invites, appalls,
 Endows,
 Flits, glimmers, proves,
 Dissolves,
 Returns, suggests, convicts,
 Enchants —
 Then flings in
 Paradise!

FOREVER at his side to walk
 The smaller of the two,
 Brain of his brain,
 Blood of his blood,
 Two lives, one Being, now.

Forever of his fate to taste,
 If grief the largest part,
 If joy, to put my piece away
 For that belovéd heart.

All life to know each other —
 Whom we can never learn,
 And by and by a change
 Called "Heaven" —

Rapt neighborhood of men
 Just finding out what
 Puzzled us
 Without the lexicon !

ALL forgot for recollecting
 Just a paltry *One*.
 All forsook for just a stranger's
 New accompanying.

Grace of rank and grace of fortune
 Less accounted than
 An unknown content, possessing,
 Estimate who can !

Home effaced, her faces dwindled,
 Nature altered small —
 Sun if shone — or storm if shattered,
 Overlooked I all.

Dropped my fate, a timid pebble
 In thy bolder sea,
 Ask me, Sweet, if I regret it —
 Prove myself of Thee.

WHAT would I give to see
 His face ?
 I'd give — I'd give my life
 Of course,
 But that is not enough !
 Stop just a minute, let
 Me think —
 I'd give my biggest bobolink !
 That makes two — him and life.
 You know who June is ?
 I'd give her,
 Roses a day from Zanzibar,
 And lily tubes, like wells ;
 Bees by the furlong,
 Straits of blue
 Navies of butterflies sailed through,
 And dappled cowslip dells.
 Then I have "shares" in
 Primrose "banks,"
 Daffodil "dowries," spicy "stocks,"
 Dominions broad as dew,
 Bags of doubloons, adventurous
 Bees
 Brought me from firmamental seas,
 And purple from Peru.
Now, have I bought it,
 Shylock ? Say !
 Sign me the bond !

I vow to pay
To him who pledges this —
One hour of her sov'reign's
Face!
Ecstatic contract!
Niggard grace!
My kingdom's worth of bliss!

THE sunrise runs for Both,
 The East her purple troth
 Keeps with the hill,
 The noon unwinds her blue
 Till one breadth cover Two
 Remotest still.

Nor does the night forget
 A lamp for each to set,
 Wicks wide away,
 The North her blazing sign
 Enacts in iodine,
 Till Both can see.

The midnight's dusky arms
 Clasp hemispheres and homes,
 And so
 Upon her bosom, One,
 And One upon her hem,
 Both lie.

WHY do I love thee, Sir?

Because —

The wind does not

Require the grass

To answer wherefore, when

He pass,

She cannot keep her place.

The lightning never asked

An eye

Wherefore she shut when

He was by —

Because he knows

She cannot speak,

And reasons not contained

Of talk

There be — preferred by daintier folk.

WHERE Thou art — that is Home,
 Cashmere or Calvary — the same,
 Degree — or shame,
 I scarce esteem location's name
 So I may come.

What Thou do'st is delight,
 Bondage as play be sweet,
 Imprisonment content
 And sentence sacrament,
 Just we two meet !

Where Thou art not is Woe —
 Though bands of spices blow,
 What Thou do'st not — Despair —
 Though Gabriel praise me, Sir !

AH, necromancy sweet !

Ah, wizard erudite !

Teach me the skill

That I instill the pain

Surgeons assuage in vain,

Nor herb of all the plain

Can heal !

ONE and One are One,
 Two be finished using,
 Well enough for schools
 But for inner choosing,
 Life — just, or Death —
 Or the Everlasting.
 Two would be too vast,
 For the Soul's comprising.

SOME say Good Night at night,
 I say Good Night by day,
 Good-by — the going utter me —
 Good Night I still reply.
 For parting — that is night
 And presence simply dawn,
 Itself the purple on the height
 Denominated Morn.

I AM ashamed, I hide —
 What right have I to be a
 Bride,
 So late a dowerless girl?
 Nowhere to hide my dazzled
 Face,
 No one to teach me that new
 Grace,
 Nor introduce my soul.

Me to adorn, how, tell —
 Trinket to make me beautiful,
 Fabrics of cashmere —
 Never a gown of dun, more,
 Raiment instead of Pompadour
 For me, my soul, to wear.

Fingers to frame my round hair
 Oval — as feudal ladies wore,
 Far fashions fair,
 Skill to hold my brow like an earl,
 Plead like a whippoorwill,
 Prove like a pearl.

Then for character
 Fashion my spirit quaint, while
 Quick like a liquor,
 Gay like Light
 Bring me my best pride.
 No more ashamed,
 No more to hide,
 Meek, let it be —
 Too proud for pride,
 Baptized this day
 A Bride.

ALTHOUGH I put away his life,
An ornament too grand
For forehead low as mine to wear,
This might have been the hand

That sowed the flowers he preferred,
Or smoothed a homely pain —
Or pushed the pebble from his path,
Or played his chosen tune

On lute the least, the latest,
But just his ear could know
That what soe'er delighted it
I never would let go.

The foot to bear his errand
A little boot I know
Would leap abroad like antelope
With just the grant to do.

His weariest commandment
A sweeter to obey
Than "Hide and Seek", or skip to flutes,
Or all day chase the bee.

Your servant, Sir, will weary,
The surgeon will not come,
The world will have its own to do,
The dust will vex your fame.

The cold will force your tightest door
Some February day,
But say my apron bring the sticks
To make your cottage gay,

That I may take that promise
To Paradise with me —
To teach the angels avarice
Your kiss first taught to me!

YOU see, I cannot see your lifetime,
 I must guess
 How many times it ache
 For me to-day —
 Confess

How many times for
 My far sake
 The brave eyes film.
 But I guess guessing hurts,
 Mine get so dim!

Too vague the face
 My own so patient covets,
 Too far the strength
 My timidness enfolds;
 Haunting the heart
 Like her transplanted faces,
 Teasing the want
 It only can suffice.

I KNOW lives I could miss
 Without misery,
 Others — whose instant's wanting
 Would be Eternity.

The last a scanty number,
 'T would scarcely fill a two,
 The first — a gnat's horizon
 Could easily outgrow.

GOOD morning, Midnight!
 I'm coming home,
 Day got tired of me —
 How could I of him?

Sunshine was a sweet place,
 I liked to stay —
 But Morn didn't want me — now —
 So good night, Day!

I can look, can't I?
 When the East is red?
 The hills have a way, then,
 That puts the heart abroad.

You are not so fair, Midnight —
 I chose Day,
 But please take a little Girl
 He turned away!

DENIAL is the only fact
 Received by the denied,
 Whose will, a blank intelligence
 The day the Heaven died —
 And all the Earth strove common round
 Without delight or aim.
 What comfort was it Wisdom was
 The spoiler of our home?

I HAD not minded walls
 Were Universe one rock,
 And far I heard his silver call
 The other side the block.

I'd tunnel until my groove
 Pushed sudden through to his,
 Then my face take recompense —
 The looking in his eyes.

But 'tis a single hair,
 A filament, a law —
 A cobweb wove in adamant,
 A battlement of straw —

A limit like the veil
 Unto the lady's face,
 But every mesh a citadel
 And dragons in the crease!

RENUNCIATION is a piercing virtue,
The letting go
A presence for an expectation —
Not now.

The putting out of eyes
Just sunrise,
Lest Day,
Day's great progenitor
Out-show.

Renunciation is the choosing
Against itself,
Itself to justify
Unto itself,
When larger function
Make that appear
Smaller, that sated vision. Here.

SO well that I can live without —
 I love Thee; then how well
 Is that?
 As well as Jesus?
 Prove it me
 That He loved men
 As I love Thee.

THE power to be true to you
 Until upon my face
 The Judgment push His picture
 Presumptuous of your place —
 Of this — could man deprive me,
 Himself the Heaven excel,
 Whose invitation yours reduced
 Until it shone too small.

YOU taught me waiting with myself
 Appointment strictly kept,
 You taught me fortitude of fate,
 This also I have learnt.

An altitude of Death that could
 No bitterer debar
 Than Life had done before it,
 Yet — there is a science more —
 The Heaven *you* know to understand,
 That you be not ashamed
 Of me, in Christ's bright audience
 Upon the further hand.

LONGING is like the seed
That wrestles in the ground,
Believing if it intercede
It shall at length be found.

The hour and the zone
Each circumstance unknown,
What constancy must be achieved
Before it see the sun !

ONLY a shrine
 But mine;
 I made the taper shine.
 Madonna dim, to whom
 All feet may come,
 Regard a nun.
 Thou knowest every woe,
 Needless to tell Thee so,
 But canst Thou do
 The grace next to it —
 Heal?
 That looks a harder skill,
 Still — just as easy, if it be
 Thy will.
 Grant me —
 Thou knowest though,
 So why tell Thee?

IF he were living — dare I ask?
 And how if he were dead?
 And so around the words I went
 Of meeting them afraid.

I hinted changes, lapse of time,
 The surfaces of years
 I touched with caution, lest they slit
 And show me to my fears.

Reverted to adjoining lives
 Adroitly turning out
 Wherever I suspected graves —
 'Twas prudenter, I thought.

And He — I rushed with sudden force
 In face of the suspense —
 “Was buried” — “Buried!”
 “He!”
 My life just holds the trench.

WHY do they shut me
Out of Heaven?
Did I sing too loud?
But I can sing a little minor,
Timid as a bird.

Wouldn't the angels try me
Just once more?
Just see if I troubled them —
But don't shut the door!

Oh, if I were the gentlemen
In the white robes,
And they were the little hand
That knocked —
Could I forbid?

AFTER great pain a formal feeling comes —
 The nerves sit ceremonious like tombs;
 The stiff Heart questions — was it He that bore?
 And yesterday — or centuries before?

The feet mechanical go round
 A wooden way
 Of ground or air or Ought,
 Regardless grown,
 A quartz contentment like a stone.

This is the hour of lead
 Remembered if outlived
 As freezing persons recollect
 The snow —
 First chill, then stupor, then
 The letting go.

THERE is a languor of the life
More imminent than pain ;
'T is pain's successor, when the Soul
Has suffered all it can.

A drowsiness diffuses,
A dimness like a fog
Envelops consciousness
As mist obliterates a crag.

The surgeon does not blanch at pain,
His habit is severe,
But tell him that it ceased to feel —
The creature going there,

And he will tell you skill is late,
A mightier than he
Has ministered before him —
There's no vitality.

THERE is a pain so utter
 It swallows Being up,
 Then covers the abyss with trance
 So memory can step
 Around, across, upon it,
 As One within a swoon
 Goes steady, when an open eye
 Would drop him bone by bone.

JOY to have merited the pain
To merit the release.
Joy to have perished every step
To compass thee at last.

Pardon to look upon thy face
With these old-fashioned eyes —
Better than new could be, for that,
Tho' bought in Paradise —

Because they looked on thee before
And thou hadst looked on them —
Prove me, my hazel witnesses,
The features are the same.

So fleet thou wert when present,
So infinite when gone —
An Orient's apparition
Remanded of the morn.

The height I recollect
'Twas ever with the hills,
The depth upon my soul
Was notched
As floods on whites of wheels.

To haunt till Time has
Dropped
His slow decade away,
And haunting actualize
To last
At least, Eternity.

REHEARSAL to ourselves
Of a withdrawn delight
Affords a bliss like murder,
Omnipotent, acute.

We will not drop the dirk
Because we love the wound
The dirk commemorate,
Itself
Remind us that we did.

I TIE my hat, I crease my shawl,
Life's little duties do precisely
As the very least
Were infinite to me.

I put new blossoms in the glass,
And throw the old away ;
I push a petal from my gown
That anchored there — I weigh

The time 'twill be till six o'clock,
I have so much to do —
And get existence some way back,
Stopped, struck, my ticking through.

We cannot put ourselves away
As a completed man
Or woman — when the errand's done
We came to flesh upon.

There may be miles on miles of nought
Of action, — sicker far,
To simulate is stinging work
To cover what we are

From science and from surgery,
Too telescopic eyes
To bear on us unshaded,
For their sake, not for ours.

WHEN I hoped, I recollect
Just the place I stood
In a chamber facing West —
Roughest air was good.

Not a sleet could bite me,
Not a frost could cool,
Hope it was that kept me warm —
Not merino shawl.

When I feared — I recollect
Just the day it was —
Worlds were swimming in the Sun,
Yet how Nature froze !

Icicles upon my soul
Prickled raw and cool,
Birds went praising everywhere,
Mine alone was still.

And the day that I despaired —
This if I forget,
Nature will that it be night
When the sun is set.

Dark shall overtake the hill,
Overtake the sky,
Nature hesitate before
Memory — and me.

FROM blank to blank
 A threadless way
 I pushed mechanic feet,
 To stop or perish
 Or advance —
 Alike indifferent

If end I gained,
 If ends beyond
 Indefinite disclosed,
 I shut my eyes and
 Groped as well,
 'Twas lighter to be blind.

I GOT so I could hear his name
Without —
Tremendous gain ! —
That stop-sensation in my soul,
And thunder in the room.

I got so I could walk across
That angle in the floor
Where he turned — so — and I
Turned — how —
And all our sinew tore.

I got so I could stir the box
In which
His letters grew,
Without that forcing in my breath
As staples driven through.

Could dimly recollect a Grace —
I think
They called it “God”,
Renowned to ease extremity
When formula had failed —

And shape my hands
Petition’s way —
Tho’ ignorant of word
That Ordination utters —
My business with the cloud.

If any Power behind it be
 Not subject to despair,
 Its care
 In some remoter way
 For so minute affair
 As misery —
Itself too vast for interrupting more,
 Supremer than —
 Superior to —

AT leisure is the Soul
That gets a staggering blow ;
The width of Life
Before it spreads
Without a thing to do.

It begs you give it work,
But just the placing pins —
Or humblest patchwork
Children do —
To help its vacant hands.

“TILL death” is narrow loving;
 The scantiest heart extant
 Will hold you, till your
 Privilege
 Of finiteness be spent.

But he whose loss procures you
 Such destitution that
 Your life, too abject for itself,
 Thenceforward imitate —

Until, resemblance perfect,
 Yourself for his pursuit
 Delight of nature abdicate,
 Exhibit love somewhat.

AND this of all my hopes —
This is the silent end.
Bountiful colored my morning rose,
Early and sere its end.

Never bud from a stem
Stepped with so gay a foot,
Never a worm so confident
Bored at so brave a root.

SAVIOR! I've no one else to tell
 And so I trouble Thee,
 I am the one forgot Thee so.
 Dost Thou remember me?

Not for myself I came so far,
 That were the little load —
 I brought Thee the imperial heart
 I had not strength to hold.

The heart I carried in my own,
 Till mine too heavy be,
 Yet strangest — *heavier*
 Since it went —
 Is it too large for Thee?

IT ceased to hurt me, though
 So slow
 I could not see the trouble go —
 But only knew by looking back
 That something had obscured
 The track.

Nor when it altered, I could say —
 For I had worn it every day
 As constant as the childish frock
 I hung upon the nail at night.

Nor what consoled it — I
 Could trace,
 Except whereas 't was wilderness
 It's better, almost Peace.

A WIFE at daybreak I shall be,
 Sunrise, hast thou a flag for me?
 At midnight I am yet a maid —
 How short it takes to make it bride!
 Then, Midnight, I have passed from thee
 Unto the East and Victory.

Midnight, "Good night"
 I hear them call.
 The angels bustle in the hall,
 Softly my Future climbs the stair,
 I fumble at my childhood's prayer —
 So soon to be a child no more!
 Eternity, I'm coming, Sir, —
 Master, I've seen that face before.

BEHIND me dips Eternity,
 Before me Immortality,
 Myself the term between —
 Death but the drift of Eastern gray
 Dissolving into dawn away
 Before the West begins.

'Tis Kingdom — afterwards — they say,
 In perfect pauseless monarchy,
 Whose Prince is son of none —
 Himself His dateless dynasty,
 Himself, Himself diversify
 In duplicate divine.

'Tis Miracle before me, then,
 Then Miracle behind, between,
 A crescent is the sea
 With midnight to the north of her
 And midnight to the south of her,
 And maelstrom in the sky.

AS if the sea should part
 And show a further sea —
 And that a further, and the three
 But a presumption be
 Of periods of seas
 Unvisited of shores —
 Themselves the verge of seas to be —
 Eternity is these.

NOT what we did shall be the test
 When act and will are done,
 But what our Lord infers we *would* —
 Had we diviner been.

APPENDIX

The poems in the Appendix have either been published in the "Life and Letters of Emily Dickinson" — but not in the "Complete Poems," — or they have appeared in part only in the "Complete Poems" and are here restored as originally written.

M. D. B.

IT will be Summer eventually —
Ladies with parasols,
Sauntering gentlemen with canes,
And little girls with dolls

Will tint the pallid landscape
As 'twere a bright bouquet,
Though drifted deep in Parian
The village lies to-day.

The lilacs, bending many a year,
Will sway with purple load;
The bees will not despise the tune
Their forefathers have hummed;

The wild rose redden in the bog,
The aster on the hill
Her everlasting fashion set,
And covenant gentians frill,

Till Summer folds her miracle
As women do their gown,
Or priests adjust the symbols
When Sacrament is done.*

I'm sorry for the Dead to-day,
It's such congenial times
Old neighbors have at fences
At time o' year for hay —

When broad sun-burned acquaintances
Discourse between the toil
And laugh, a homely species,
That makes the meadows smile.

It seems so straight to lie away
From all the noise of fields,
The busy carts, the fragrant cocks,
The mower's meter steals

A trouble, lest they're homesick, —
Those farmers and their wives,
Set separate from the farming
And all the neighbors' lives.

I wonder if the sepulchre
Is not a lonesome way,
When men and boys, and larks and June
Go down the fields to hay! †

* Published in the "Complete Poems" on page 126 with the first stanza omitted; now given as originally written.

† The first four stanzas have never before been published. The last stanza only appeared on page 244 of the "Complete Poems."

To disappear enhances;
The man who runs away
Is tintured for an instant
With Immortality.

But yesterday a vagrant,
Today in memory lain
With superstitious merit
We tamper with again.

But never far as Honour
Removes the paltry One,
And impotent to cherish
We hasten to adorn.

Of Death the sharpest function,
That, just as we discern,
The Excellence defies us;
Securest gathered then

The fruit perverse to plucking,
But leaning to the sight
With the ecstatic limit
Of unobtained Delight.*

* The first three stanzas have never before been published. The last two only appeared on page 266 of the "Complete Poems."

GOD is a distant, stately Lover,
 Woos, so He tells us, by His Son.
 Surely a vicarious courtship!
 Miles' and Priscilla's such a one.
 But lest the soul, like fair Priscilla,
 Choose the envoy and spurn the Groom,
 Vouches, with hyperbolic archness,
 Miles and John Alden
 Are synonym.*

* First four lines only before published in a paper by her niece.

(With a bit of Pine)

A FEATHER from the whippoorwill
 That everlasting sings,
 Whose galleries are sunrise,
 Whose stanzas are the spring,
 Whose emerald nest the ages spin
 With mellow murmuring thread,
 Whose beryl egg what schoolboys hunt
 In "recess" overhead! *

* Published on page 266 of the "Life and Letters."

THERE are two ripenings —
 One of sight, whose forces
 Spheric wind,
 Until the velvet product
 Drops, spicy, to the ground.

A homelier maturing,
 The process in the burr —
 That teeth of frosts
 Alone disclose
 On far October air.*

* Published on page 207 of the "Life and Letters."

THE zeros taught us phosphorus,
 We learned to like the fire
 By handling glaciers when a boy,
 And tinder guessed by power
 Of opposite to equal ought,
 Eclipses sums imply,
 Paralysis our primer numb
 Unto vitality.*

* Published on page 227 of the "Life and Letters."

JUST once! Oh, least request!
 Could Adamant refuse
 So small a grace
 So scanty put —
 Such agonizing terms?
 Would not a God of Flint
 Be conscious of a sigh
 As down His Heaven
 Dropt, remote,
 “Just once! Sweet Deity?” *

* Published on page 256 of the “Life and Letters.”

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